

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-23, without prejudice. Please add new claims 24-46, as shown below.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the Application:

Claims 1-23 (cancelled)

Claim 24 (new): A cover for a welding wire container having an upper surface provided with a slot through which the welding wire can be withdrawn from the container, and having a spacer which defines an inner portion and an outer portion of the slot such that welding wire extending through the inner portion of the slot is held spaced from welding wire extending through the outer portion of the slot.

Claim 25 (new): The cover of claim 24, wherein the spacer is formed such as its spacing effect can be overcome by the welding wire.

Claim 26 (new): The cover of claim 24, wherein the spacer is attached to the cover so as to be at least partially detachable from the cover.

Claim 27 (new): The cover of claim 24, wherein the spacer is formed so as to be destructible.

Claim 28 (new): The cover of claim 24, wherein the spacer is formed so as to be deflectable such that the welding wire is allowed to pass the spacer when the spacer is in a deflected condition.

Claim 29 (new): The cover of claim 24, wherein the spacer is formed from an adhesive strip.

Claim 30 (new): The cover of claim 24, wherein the spacer is formed from a label attached to the cover.

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Claim 31 (new): The cover of claim 29, wherein the spacer is formed from an inner label and an outer label.

Claim 32 (new): The cover of claim 31, wherein the inner and outer labels each have an opening for the welding wire.

Claim 33 (new): The cover of claim 29, wherein the spacer is formed from a single adhesive strip.

Claim 34 (new): The cover of claim 24, wherein the spacer is a plate attached to an upper surface of the cover.

Claim 35 (new): The cover of claim 34, wherein the plate is attached to the upper surface of the cover on one side of the slot only.

Claim 36 (new): The cover of claim 24, wherein the spacer is formed of plastic.

Claim 37 (new): The cover of claim 24, wherein the spacer comprises at least one narrow portion of the slot at which edges of the slot are arranged opposite each other with a distance which is smaller than a diameter of the welding wire.

Claim 38 (new): The cover of claim 24, wherein the slot extends from an edge of the cover towards and beyond a center of the cover.

Claim 39 (new): The cover of claim 24, wherein an elevated portion is provided in a center of the cover.

Claim 40 (new): The cover of claim 39, wherein the elevated portion has a shape of a truncated cone.

Claim 41 (new): The cover of claim 39, wherein the elevated portion has a shape of a truncated pyramid.

Claim 42 (new): The cover of claim 41, wherein the slot crosses one side surface and a top surface of the truncated pyramid and extends over almost an entire opposite side surface of the truncated pyramid.

Claim 43 (new): The cover of claim 24, wherein the slot has a width of approximately 20 mm.

Claim 44 (new): A welding wire container having a body for accommodation of a welding wire coil, and an upper opening through which welding wire can be withdrawn from the body, and having a spacer which allows to separate a welding wire portion currently withdrawn from a welding wire portion leading to another welding wire container.

Claim 45 (new): A welding wire container having a body for accommodation of a welding wire coil, and an upper opening through which welding wire can be withdrawn from the body, and having a spacer which allows to separate a welding wire portion currently withdrawn from a welding wire portion leading to another welding wire container, wherein the spacer is provided on a cover according to claim 1.

Claim 46 (new): The welding wire container of claim 44, wherein the spacer is arranged inside the body close to the opening.